

CUBA, IN U.N., CALLS ACCUSATION ON ZAIRE 'ABSOLUTELY FALSE'

Says U.S. Has Reasons to Know
It Is Spreading 'Lies' About
Havana's Aiding Rebels

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., May 30—Cuba's Vice President declared in the General Assembly today that President Carter's charges that the Cuban Government had a role in the recent rebel invasion of Zaire were "absolutely false."

Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez said the United States Government had sufficient reasons to know that its accusations were based on "impudently repeated lies."

President Carter, speaking at a news conference in Chicago Thursday, accused Cuba of having played a key role in training and equipping the so-called Katangan rebels who raided Zaire's Shaba Province from bases in Angola. He also denounced the Soviet Union for "continued interference in the affairs of African nations" and said Cuba had acted as its surrogate.

Carter Accused of Distortion

Mr. Rodríguez, addressing the General Assembly's special session on disarmament, accused Mr. Carter of having distorted the policy of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Africa and then declared:

"I can reaffirm before this Assembly that Cuba has not participated directly or indirectly in the events in Shaba; that not only were there no Cubans present in this action but that, furthermore, Cuba did not supply the arms for that purpose nor did it train those who attacked."

[Asked about the denial, President Carter said in Washington: "We have never accused the Cuban troops of being part of the invading force, but there is no doubt about the fact that the Cubans have a heavy—even dominant—position in Angola, that they were involved in training the Katangans who did invade Zaire." Mr. Carter added that "there is no doubt that the Cubans knew about it, encouraged it and were responsible for their training" and the weapons used were "the same the Cubans use and which are supplied by the Soviet Union."]

The Cuban representative had already denied the accusations in private meetings with Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, with Andrew Young, the United

States delegate, and with Senator George McGovern, who is a member of the American delegation to the five-week session. President Fidel Castro in Havana has also vigorously denied any involvement in the Zaire raid.

The issue of Cuban involvement in the Zaire raid has become a controversy in Washington. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, acting on a request from Senator McGovern, the South Dakota Democrat, has decided to investigate the matter and to seek testimony from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Rodríguez told the General Assembly that President Carter's foreign policy was contradictory and marked by divergent influences. The Cuban said that, in a speech by Mr. Carter in March, there had been the "rumble of war drums" and a return to cold-war language. In that speech, the President had assailed the involvement of the Soviet Union and Cuba on the side of Ethiopia in the conflict with Somalia.

The Cuban official also charged that the United States and its Western allies, by abetting the "South African racists," bore responsibility for a South African raid earlier this month into Angola, where Cuban forces have been assisting the Government. South Africa, which was condemned for the raid, defended it as an operation directed against bases from which guerrillas were striking at South-West Africa. This territory is being controlled by South Africa in defiance of United Nations resolutions.

Mr. Rodríguez said the United States and its Western allies were also responsible for what he described as South Africa's continued massacres and for its violation of Angolan territory. He raised the question of what the West's attitude would be if Cuban troops were not in Angola under a defense agreement with the Government and in position to act as a deterrent.

Western Shelter for Rhodesia Seen

Mr. Rodríguez said Prime Minister Ian D. Smith of Rhodesia was able to attack neighboring black nations because he profited from the "shelter" provided by his involvement in negotiations with Britain and the United States.

It was "no less an ominous sign," he said, that France and Belgium flew troops to Zaire with American logistical support on the pretext of saving the lives of their citizens because of the invasion by the rebels.

By contrast, Mr. Rodríguez pictured Cuba's own involvement in Africa as a response to requests by the Angolans and the Ethiopians for help from Cuban troops.

"They did not leave Cuba to promote conflicts," the Vice President said. "Rather they were called by the representatives of those people to fight beside them to insure their sovereignty and independence."

He expressed support for the Soviet Union's latest disarmament proposals and was applauded by both the Soviet bloc and the majority of smaller third-world countries, which, like Cuba, regard themselves as politically nonaligned.